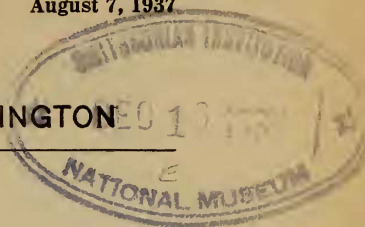


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON



THE BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER OF SOUTHERN SONORA.

BY A. J. VAN ROSSEM AND THE MARQUESS HACHISUKA.

During a recent collecting trip conducted by van Rossem and Robert Hannum in the combined interests of the Dickey, Hachisuka, and Sheffler collections, one of the unexpected racial variations discovered in the Sierra Madre of extreme southeastern Sonora was a blue-gray gnatcatcher which was recognized even in the field as distinct from the well-known subspecies of the western United States. A description follows and the new race may be known as

Polioptila caerulea gracilis, subsp. nov.

Type.—Breeding male adult, number 31881 Dickey collection; collected by A. J. van Rossem and Robert Hannum at Rancho Santa Barbara, 20 miles northeast of Guirocoba in extreme southeastern Sonora, Mexico, June 8, 1937, altitude (approximately) 5000 feet.

Subspecific characters.—Differs from *Polioptila caerulea amoenissima* Grinnell in paler and more ashy blue dorsal coloration and whiter posterior underparts; black on forehead of adult summer males reduced to a mere trace and the black superciliary streaks reduced to slight indications which scarcely reach the eye. Tail, bill, and tarsus shorter than in *amoenissima*, and the tarsi and feet notably more slender.

Range.—Oak regions of the Sierra Madre foothills in extreme southeastern Sonora and probably in adjacent parts of Chihuahua and Sinaloa.

Remarks.—We know of no specimens of the blue-gray gnatcatcher taken in the breeding season in any part of southern Sonora save for the seven individuals collected in the present instance. The widely distributed western race, *amoenissima*, occurs commonly at that season in suitable localities along the northern boundary of the State and south in the north central ranges as far as Opodepe and La Chumata at least. Specimens from these localities (examined in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy by van Rossem) appear to represent typical *amoenissima*.

A reexamination of fall, winter, and spring specimens (Dickey collection) from numerous localities in Sonora discloses only three which are unmistakably *gracilis*. Two of these are from San Esteban Island, collected on January 12, 1932, and one is from Tesia in the lower Mayo River Valley, collected on December 4, 1929. These records indicate that *gracilis* may simply descend to the coastal lowlands in winter instead of performing a southward migration.

MEASUREMENTS.

	<i>Wing.</i>	<i>Tail.</i>	<i>Exp. culmen.</i>	<i>Tarsus</i>
6 male <i>gracilis</i>	47-50	44-49	8.8-9.5	15.1-16.1
4 female <i>gracilis</i>	47-49	46-49	8.8-9.5	14.5-16.1
32 male <i>amoenissima</i>	48-52	48-55	9.0-10.6	16.0-18.4